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# MONTANA LABOR MARKET SEE 177

Monthly Review of EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK, LABOR SUPPLY, LABOR DEMAND, CURRENT EMPLOYMENTSICE OF PRESIDEN

# MONTANA STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

# Division of Unemployment Compensation Commission of Montana

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FL-175

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SEPTEMBER, 1957

## Employment Levels Off Below Seasonal Levels

Volume of non-farm employment in Montana in August was 500 below that of a year ago. It remained virtually stationary in August as compared with the previous month, failing to show even the one percent seasonal expansion usually registered in August over July. Estimates in the bureau of labor statistics series compiled jointly with the commission show 177,000 wage earners as of mid-August, compared with 176,900 in mid-July and 177,500 in August of 1956.

### Lacks Sparkle of 1956 and 1955

Leveling off of the long-range employment upsurge which characterized 1956 and 1955 has been apparent through the summer months of 1957. Instead of the normal margin of two to five percent over the previous year, the months of May, June, July and August have clung close to the levels of a year ago, fluctuating by a fractional percent up or down.

### Fewer Miners At Work

Breakdown of the 177,000 total employment figure by major industries reveals these losses from a year ago: in mining by 1,500, all in the metal mining category; in manufacturing by 300, both lumber and food processing share responsibility for that decline; and in transportation and utilities, where interstate railroads shared with bus, truck and airline a total decline of 900 from August, 1956. Construction employment was at the same level as last year, and also as in July, though August building requirements usually give an increase in employment over its preceding month.

### Gains Partially Compensate

Gains which partially offset these declines: government was employing 1,200 more people this August than last, 600 of local payrolls; 400 gain was recorded in wholesale and retail trade, and 400 in service industries, largely occasioned by increased tourist business: and 200 were added in the stable group of finance, real estate and insurance, whose total employment has nearly doubled in the past ten years.

### Seasonal Advance Weakens

Seasonal aspects of August figures on non-farm employment correspond closely to the same pattern as the 1956 to 1957 trend. While August normally provides from 1,500 to 2,000 more jobs than July, this year the increase was a meagre 100. Three industries, normally experiencing a seasonal employment rise in August, showed no change at all from July—manufacturing, construction, and the transportation group. Within the manufacturing category, lumber and logging showed a minor 100 increase, offset by a similar decline in chemical manufacturing.

# AUGUST JOB-APPLICANT SURPLUS MORE THAN DOUBLE USUAL SEASONAL FIGURE

Surplus of jobseekers over job openings prevailed through August, ending the month with 5,872 work applicants in employment service files in the state, only 547 fewer than the carryover from July. A year ago there were 2,808 available workers at the end of August, and the eight-year average is 2,633. Growth of the working force, numerically, during the year accounts for the surplus, as employment levels are approximately even with a year ago.

Fifth Successive Month Showing Record Surplus

August is the pivotal employment month in Montana, marking the maximum seasonal development of payroll numbers. At the same time August traditionally has the lowest reserve labor supply, as represented in active job applicants. This August was the fifth successive month registering a larger surplus of unemployed than the same month in the preceding eight years. Last April's count surpassed each April of the eight year period, while May, June, July, and now August, each followed suit with a substantial margin over like months of the eight year series.

	Work-Applicant		Count i	n Review			
	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951
January	 14,792	12,676	12,887	12,270	10,616	10,370	11,685
March	 14,930	12,663	11,979	11,075	9.323	9,392	10,884
May	 9,032	5,105	5,565	6,191	4,324	3,276	4,312
July	6,419	3,807	4,628	4,283	3,249	2.191	3,260
August .	 5,872	2,808	2,458	3,519	2,069	1,619	2.370
September	6,200*	2,889	2,781	3.782	2,288	1,388	2,304
November		6,453	6,968	5,617	5,048	4,135	4,341

Butte Has Biggest Supply

\*Estimated.

Butte leads in surplus labor supply with 1,510; Missoula has 748. Billings 731, Great Falls 555, Kalispell 530, followed by Hamilton with 278 and Bozeman 252. These seven areas account for 4,200 of the state's surplus labor and 2,600 of the increase from last year occurred in that group. Fifteen other employment service centers account for the remaining 1,650 jobseekers, and for less than 500 increase over a year ago.

### Youths and In-Migration a Factor

Factors contributing to the over-supply of labor include the young men and women coming into the labor force as they reach employment age and circumstance: augmented by immigration coming into the state and re-entry of other workers after an absence from job status. Absorption of this added labor supply requires development of new jobs in industry at a faster clip than recent economy has made possible.

### Marked Decline in Three Industries

Three major industries are contributing substantially to the employment stalemate which leaves nearly 6,000 Montanans without jobs at the peak hiring season of the year. They are metal mining, lumber and logging, and transportation. Lag in metal and lumber production has played a part in reducing the needs for manpower in transportation. This is further accentuated by technological changes in rail motor power and consequent lessening of manpower requirements.

### Metal Mining Hit By Price Decline

Mining production has been curtailing steadily because of a decreasing price level for several of its principal products, copper, lead, and zinc. Estimates run as high as 2,000 decrease from a year ago of miner employment in the Butte area alone. The symptom is not confined to Montana, but permeates the national and international pictures as well. Market price reports do not indicate any early recovery of these price levels.

### Lumher Market Slump Reduces Johs

Montana's lumber and logging volume of employment, like in the mining industry, is patterned with lumber in other producing states and areas. Curtailment of home building and of large-scale housing projects all over the country, in the wake of tightened credit and higher interest rates, reduces the demand for and price level of the product. In the face of such decline lumber operators as a rule have been compelled to cut production drastically, and manpower hears the brunt of that reduction.

### Other Construction Near Normal

Other types of construction in Montana have done much to sustain employment in that phase of industry. Work on the several dams for power purposes, building of power plants, airbase building and expansion, radar stations in the national defense chain, commercial buildings and school structures, have helped to keep the manpower crews in construction at or near the levels of recent years. But maintaining the old level is not enough, in face of an expanding labor force.

### Highway and Bridge Jobs Help

Highway and bridge construction is about keeping employment pace with other years. State contracts employed 1.268 in August. 150 above the July payroll but 220 fewer (Continued on Page Two)

# Along the Hiring Line—Field Summary, Sept. 1

ANALONDA, Deer Lodge, Philipsburg—130 jobseekers, 75 new, 72 men, 58 women). Labor demand remained light through August. Virtually no hiring at the smelters but a heavy proportion of students on the force will create some vacancies as they eturn to school in September. Backlog of experienced former employees awaiting reemployment. Farm hiring has slacked off with completion of hay harvest.

BHTINGS, Columbus, Hardin, Bysham, Imirel, Red Lodge, Roundup—(731 jobs.ckets, 628 new) 493 men, 238 women). Construction work still lags behind the volume of past summer seasons. Residence building seems to be held back by tight money. Some buildings under way will be mished this fell, a few will carry into winter period. Transient labor supply about normal for the season. Some train and engine crews called back by increased rail traffic, cattle and wheat shipments. Two extra gangs continue operations. Some layoffs reported in railway shops.

BOZIMAN, Innis, Three Forks, Trident (252 tobseekers, 220 new; 171 men, 81 women). New water main installation proceeding on schedule, fully supplied with local labor. Other building activities center largely at the college, where student housing project is nearly completed, a new office and classroom building is starting, and preparations have begun for other building to start this fall. A bridge contract nearby is nearly finished. Season tun to: local canning plant ending.

BULLE, Virginia City, Whitehal!—(1,510 tobseekers, 683 new; 1,146 men, 264 women). One estimate is that there are 2,000 fewer miners at work underground here than a year ago, compensated only in part by put mining. Craftsmen at mines also affected, carpenters, electricians and machinists. Some migration is noted. Entire economy of community feels the decline in mining, loan companies busy with repossessing. Service and trade employment is curtailed. Season's construction program about completed.

GUT BANK—(78 jobseekers, 167 new; 65 men. 13 women). Very little construction in progress, a highway job using a crew of 14 and a new store being built. Oil field activity is likewise dull. Park construction program this season did not furnish usual labor demand for building skills. Farm harvest early and somewhat spotted.

DILLON (59 jobseekers, 65 new, 23 or 36 (vome)). A street improvement program is holstering construction employment two streets already under oiling program for next seadditional streets on program for next seadditional streets on program for next sea-

## LABOR MARKET INDICATORS

Employment—	1957	1957	1956	1950-1956
Industrial 1 mployment	177,000	176,900	177,500	163,800
New Job Applications	4,033	4,864	3,250	2,821
Job Applicants, End of Month	5,872	6,419	2,808	2.391
	Sept. 6	Aug. 2	Sept. 7	Avg. 1st Sept. Wk.
Insured Unemployment—	1957	1957	1956	1950-1956
New and Renewal Claims	576	529	171	189
Unemployed Weeks Filed	2.756	2.760	685	908
Total Unemployment Claims	3,332	3,289	856	1,097

son. College building program past the half-way mark, and building of a power line to the Big Hole has begun.

GLASGOW, Fort Peck, Malta, Opheim—(122 jobseekers, 98 new; 67 men, 55 women). Air base employment approached 500 in August, as against 850 a year ago. Lack of materials held down the work. Fort Peck powerhouse construction is slow getting under way. Other construction includes a telephone building, street paving and a number of residences. Farm harvest operations nearly completed, exchange of labor and equipment was the rule this season.

GLENDIVE, Circle, Wibaux—(65 jobseekers, 66 new; 30 men and 35 women). Oil field hiring lags behind record of former years. Construction employment has improved slowly but is less than a year ago. Harvest is about completed, with no shortage of farm help for the season.

GREAT FALLS, Choteau, Fort Benton, stanford—(555) jobseekers, 361 new; 317 men, 238 women). The city's extensive street improvement program is expected to be completed in September, releasing skilled and unskilled construction workers, mostly resident of the community. Erection of housing and residence buildings has been halted by a shortage of water in city supply mains. Approval of funds for augmenting the city system is expected to revive much of the building program.

HAMILTON, Stevensville—(278 jobseekers, 33 new; 194 men, 84 women). Completion of raspberry harvest and of the cherry canning season released a considerable working force, some of whom were housewives withdrawing from labor market. Contract construction program continues to be a negligible hiring factor. Lumber market

### AUGUST JOB APPLICANTS

(Continued from Page 1.)

than in August last year. Work was in progress on 335 miles of road contracts and tive million dollars worth of bridges. Maintenance crews numbered 782 workers this August, 760 in July, and 835 a year ago.

blamed for further layoffs in sawmill and logging camps.

HAVRE, Chinook, Harlem—(64 jobseekers, 94 new; 24 men, 40 women). Transient work applicants are less numerous than a year ago. Employment outlook is downward, both in industry and form circles. Increased hiring has occurred for railroad extra gangs, due to heavy turnover.

HELENA, Boulder, Garrison, Townsend, White Sulphur Springs—(180 jobseekers, 321 new; 130 men, 50 women). Forest fires caused a flurry of short-time hiring in August, rains shortened the fire season. No new construction starts. City street improvement proceeds but will carry over to next year. Labor supply fully adequate, with liberal flow of transients in addition.

KALISPELL, Columbia Falls, Eureka, Libby, Whitefish—(530 jobseekers, 147 new; 365 men, 165 women). Hiring in the lumber industry tapered off, after a fair showing in late July. Plans of principal operators are not indicitive of recovery this fall. Imployment in construction increased in late August, with good prospects through September. New radar station to start this month, a high school building is starting at Columbia Falls, and the home building program has quickened.

LEWISTOWN, Harlowton, Ryegate, Winnett—(60) jobseekers, 38 new; 36 men, 24 women). Full building crews are engaged on the new radar station, the access road well along and actual building begun. Full crews also on Missouri bridge and approach roads, due to finish in 1958. Labor supply adequate. Agricultural employment season passed its peak in August, very little hiring ahead.

LIVINGSTON, Big Timher—(72 jobseckers, 74 new; 48 men, 24 women). Yellowstone Park labor demands met, seasonal slowdown has begun in construction, while service payrolls are already curtailed. Several road and bridge jobs making steady progress in Livingston area, telephone building under way and several residences being ejected. An elevator job begun at Big Limber. Railroad demand increased in

### FIGURAL ARS OF MONTANA INDUSTREAL EMPLOYMENT TOTALS, BY MONTHS (in Thousands)

	fan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Aver.
	1 1 1	1. 7.2	183	1421	147 3	133 6	154.9	1.57 1	150.8	152.2	150.7	148.8	147.0
1 , 7 1	1717	1 21/1	140.3	145.9	149,4	1.54.1	153.5	154 6	154.3	1524	151.7	150.6	149,0
11.5	140	140.7	143.0	149.7	154.8	150.0	1595	1612	1:04	157.0	150.0	154.9	153.2
19	11"	141.5	1.46.3	149.7	153.1	158.0	1.58.5	160.0	16213	159.6	157.6	156.4	154.2
47.1	1.67	148.8				161.6	16.11	100 1	154.9	153.9	158.2	155.7	155.0
1 7	11 4	1400	1.47.4	153.4	158.4	166.8	168.2	1704	1698	1650	162.4	160.3	159.8
	1714	1771	1 1 1		167 %	175.0	175.7	177.5	176.9	1-3 6	167.9	165.2	166.7
-	1 1/4	177	1 6 6	16.10	16:5	1748	1700	177 0					

# Along the Hiring Line— Field Summary, Sept. 1

(Continued from Page Two)

August, with initial staffing of new shops. Extra gangs are still on track maintenance. Lumber mills and woods work are operating full time and with peak crews of the season.

MILES CITY, Baker, Broadus, Ekalaka, Forsyth, Jordan, Terry—(64 jobseekers, 117 new; 40 men, 24 women). No major construction projects in sight. Bridge jobs at Miles City and Forsyth more than half completed but not active in labor market. A few small building projects under way or soon to start. Harvest completed, with adequate labor supply, only farm demand now is for fall plowing and planting plus maintenance work.

MISSOULA, Drummond, Arlee, Superior—(748 jobseekers, 344 new; 546 men, 202 women). Pulp mill is nearing completion, may start operation this fall, key workers to be brought from similar plants. Several bridge contracts are fully staffed, and the enlargement program at the airport is well along. This area has furnished considerable help on the Noxon project near Thompson Falls. Very little activity in the lumber field, most mills on reduced force. Superior plant taking off a night crew of 38.

POLSON—(109 jobseekers, 41 new; 81 men, 28 women). Curtailment of lumber operations responsible for increasing file of work-applicants. Orders are scarce and operators are forced to cut down production. The cherry season created a beavy labor demand for picking and packing, concluding in early August. Road projects fully staffed, with little turnover and no indication of adding new crews.

SHELBY, Chester, Conrad—(66 jobseekers, 244 new; 50 men. 16 women). All construction jobs in area with full crews and little turnover. Hospital additions at Shelby and Conrad will be finished this fall, a repair job is in progress on an elevator and three residences are under way. A grain terminal requiring crew of about 100 will be started in 1958, and a heavy highway program is in sight for that time. Oil fields are below normal in employment for the season.

SIDNEY—(32 jobseekers, 31 new; 16 men, 16 women). Work progresses on the new power plant, employing about 150, very little turnover. Oiling on the Lambert-Richey road is beginning, grading and graveling completed. A school addition was completed for use with opening of schools, and work is going on with a hospital addition and a new lodge hall. Labor outlook is definitely down until spring. Farm harvest requirements all met.

THOMPSON FALLS, Hot Springs—(117 jobseekers. 82 new: 72 men, 45 women) Employment on the Noxon dam and relocation jobs reached its peak at 1,375 in August. Laying of rails is finishing, relaxing the pressure which had drawn labor from all adjacent areas. Labor demand slow in the sawmills and woods. A planer is being added to equipment at one sawmill, while two lumber sheds are being built.

WOLF POINT, Plentywood, Scobey—(50 jobseekers, 104 new; 32 men. 18 women). Oil exploration added employment of four additional seismograph crews and one drilling outfit in August. Construction, on the other hand, declined with completion of two road and two bridge contracts.

# ESTIMATED EMPLOYMENT IN NON-AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES IN MONTANA (1)

(Produced in co-operation with United States Bureau of Labor Statistics)

	EM	PLOYME	Net Change			
INDUSTRY	Aug. 1957 (2)	July 1957 (3)	Aug. 1956	July '57 to Aug. '57	Aug. '56 to Aug. '57	
NONAGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES	177,000	176,900	177,500	100	_ 500	
Manufacturing	22,300	22,300	22,600	0	300	
Durable goods	15,000	14,900	15,000	100	0	
Lumber and timber products Primary metals Other (4)	8,610 5,100 1,300	3,500 5,100 1,300	8,900 4,800 1,300	()	= 300 300	
Nondurable goods	7,300	7,400	7,600	- 100	— 30C	
Food and kindred products	3,500 1,600 1,200 1,000	1,600	1,600 1,200	0 0	4	
Mining  Metal mining  Coal, quarrying and nonmetallic  Petroleum-natural gas production	11,000 7,200 900 2,900	7,600 900	8,700 900	_ 400	(	
Contract Construction  Contractors, building construction  Contractors, other than building  Contractors, special trade	15,100 5,700 4,700 4,700	5,800 4,800	5,800 5,200	— 100 — 100	- 100 - 500	
Transportation and utilities	22,300 12,300 3,900 6,100	12,200 <b>4,</b> 000	12,700 4,300	$^{+}$ 100 $^{-}$ 100	400	
Trade  Wholesale trade  Retail trade  General merchandise and apparel  Food stores  Eating and drinking establishments  Automotive and filling stations  Retail trade not elsewhere classified	6,200 4,800	9,700 34,000 6,000 4,800 9,600 6,700	9,700 34,100 6,400 5,000 9,200 6,400	100 400 200 0 200	100 300 — 200 — 200 600	
Finance, insurance and real estate	6,000	5,900	5,800	100	200	
Services and miscellaneous	23,700 4,500 2,600 16,600	4,500 2,600 16,500	4,300 2,500 16,500	()	20) 100	
Government Federal. State and local.	32,490 9,100 23,300	9,200 23,400	31,200 8,500	$\  - 100$	600	
Great Falls Area (Cascade County)  Manufacturing Contract construction Transportation and utilities Trade, wholesale and retail Services and miscellaneous (7) Government	21,000 3,000 2,400 2,500 6,600 4,100 2,400	20,900 3,100 2,300 2,500 6,500 4,100	3,000 2,100 2,500 6,100 4,000	- 100 100 100 100	00 300 500 100	

- (1) Estimates include all full and part-time wage and salary workers who worked or received pay during the pay period ending nearest the 15th of the month. Proprietors, firm members, personnel of the armed forces, domestic servants, and self-employed persons are excluded.
- (2) Preliminary estimates based on return tropa samples of 576 selected Montana establishments
- (3) Figures previously released have been revised on return from 1,155 such establishments.(4) Includes fabricated metal products, machinery except electrical, furniture, stone and clay
- products.
  (5) Includes apparel, chemicals, and miscellaneous manufacturing products
- (6) Includes commercial trade schools, auto repair services and garages, miscellaneous repair services and hand trades, motion pictures, amusements and recreation, medical and health, law offices and professional services, nonprofit membership organizations and business not otherwise classified.
- (7) Same as (6) above, also includes finance, real estate and mining.

### COMPARISON OF BASIC LABOR MARKET TRANSACTIONS IN AUGUST, 1957 AND AUGUST, 1956

Employment	New	Job A	Applica	nts	Job	seeker	s in F	File Job Placements U			Job Placements				U. I. C			
Service	Aug.,	1957	Aug.	1956	Aug.,	1957	Aug.	1956		Aug.,	1957			Aug.	1956		Wk	. 9-6
Office	Tot.	Vet.	Tot.	Vet.	Tot.	Vet.	Tot.	Vet.	Ind.	Ag.	Tot.	Vet.	Ind.	Ag.	Tot.	Vet.	1957	1956
				ļ.													*	
Anaconda	7.5	20	23	9	130	38	62	19	35	51	86	20,	60	62	122	36		
Billings	628	172	000	265.	731	212	500	153	459	598	1,057	383	461	524	985	195		158
Bozeman	220	89	106	17	252	71	159	3.2	222	257	479	139.	168	168	336	104	24	14
Butte	0.53	225	330	136	1,510	515	247	46	173	60	233	81	147,	9	156		1,090	
Cut Bank	167	82	83	31	78	36	58	23	53,	108	161	106	65	150	215	114	35	11
Dillon	0.5	27	32	1.5	59	10	32	8	44	228	272		2.3	327	350	112		. 5
Glasgow	98	.30	134	54	122	11	38	5	203	322	525	124	208	316	524	118	28	0
Glendive	(ht)	17	123	39	65	10	36	12	100,	285	385		109	92	201	77	15	7
Great Falls	361	126	390	144	555	150	398	110	3791	-1,025'	-1,404	271	417	1,001	1,418	378	353	
Hamilton	3,3	12	31	10	278	65	91	18	61	469	530	5.5	43	235	278	20	40	1.3
Havre	04	31	106	.38	64	12	40	15	346	477	823		210	1,017	1,227	543	41	10
Helena	321	127	234	104	180	44	127	44	285	78	363	178	179	103	282	128	95	- 66
Kalispell	147	37	229	54	5.30	151	338	93	462	25	487	68	313	50	363	99	324	4.3
Lewistown	38	1.1	57		60	11	71	11	45	212	257	7.3	45	63	108	33	37	20
Livingston	7.4	26	40	5	7.2	28	47	13	74	57	131	41	100	50	150	68	46	10
Miles City	117	30	100	30	04	16	74	15]	100	106	206	80	64	7.2	136	53	44	21
Missoula	344	125	232	88	748	247	270	83	138	71	209	93	304	142	446	231	364	7.2
Polson	41	8	77	20	109	35	74	19	1.37	667	804	56	29	100	129	25	106	
Shelby	244	104	84	43	66	22	18	1	103	258	361	129	176	155	331	122	31	
Sidney	31	6	46	7	32	7	36	5	5.3	51	104	23	60	63	123	39	19	9
Thomp. Falls	82	2()	44	1.3	117	26	58	5	900	3	93	39	65		65	3.3	96	20
Wolf Point	104	24	89	28	50	1.2	25	5	33.	200	233	43	64	195	259	47	20	. 7
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TOTALS	4,033	1,367	3,250	1,155	5,872	1,729	2,808	735	3,595	5,608	9,203	2,665	3,310	4,894	8,204	2,637	3,332	856

<sup>\*</sup>Includes 68 claims of Federal Employees U C Program, 36 same a year ago.

### AVERAGE HOURS AND EARNINGS IN SELECTED MONTANA INDUSTRIES

(Produced in co-operation with United States Bureau of Labor Statistics) (Hours and earnings data exclude administrative and salaried personnel)

	Average	Weekly	Earnings	Averag	e Weekly	Hours	Average Hourly Earnings			
INDUSTRY	Aug. (1) 1957	July (2) 1957	Aug. 1956	Aug. (1) 1957	July (2) 1957	Aug. 1956	Aug. (1) 1957	July (2) 1957	Aug. 1956	
All Manufacturing	\$81.82	\$82.51	\$94.32	36.9	37.3	42.1	\$2.22	\$2.23	\$2.24	
Durable goods Primary metals	78.39 87.05	79.45 87.05	98.00 101.95	36.0 38.1	36.3 38.1	43.4 44.3	2.18 2.29	2.19 2.28	2.26 2.30	
Nondurable goodsFood and kindred products	90.34 76.79	91.93 74.99	87.05 73.75	39.0 41.2	39.6 41.1	39.2 40.2	2.32 1.86	2.32 1.83	2.22 1.84	
All Mining	99.35	98.90	108.48	38.3	38.0	42.4	2.59	2.60	2.56	
Metal mining	96.19	96.19	110.88	37.2	37.2	43.0	2.58	2.58	2.58	
Transportation and Utilities (except railrds.)	90.62	89.84	87.26							
Transportation (except railroads) Utilities and communication	113.74 80.11	111.08	105.25 77.68	40.3	40,4	41.3	1.99	1.09	1.88	

<sup>(1)</sup> Preliminary estimates. (2) Figures previously released have been revised on more complete returns.

# UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION COMMISSION OF MONTANA

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